

Applic. No. 10/717,415
Amdt. dated May 18, 2007
Reply to Office action of February 22, 2007

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Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-12 remain in the application. Claims 1, 6, and 11 have been amended. claims 1 and 6 have been amended to include limitations from claims 1 and 6 as originally filed. Therefore, the scope of the claims has not been changed and the Examiner is kindly requested to enter the amendments to claims 1 and 6.

In item 1 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, the Examiner stated that the drawing filed with the previous response was not entered, because it introduces new matter.

The Examiner alleges that "new Fig. 2 shows details of how a vacuum pump 64 is arranged and connected to an exposure drum 1, which is not supported by the disclosure of the instant application."

It is respectfully noted that the Examiner is in error. More specifically, the on page 16, lines 19-24 of the specification it is disclosed that the vacuum chamber 44 is in the center of the drum 1 and that the vacuum chamber is connected to a

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vacuum pump (which is now designated with the reference symbol "64"). Therefore, the disclosure fully supports the Fig. 2 that was submitted in the previous response dated November 17, 2006. Accordingly, it is respectfully noted that the Examiner's allegations with respect to new matter in the drawings, is in error. As such, the Examiner is requested to enter the previously filed drawings.

In item 2 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, the drawings have been objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a).

The Examiner stated that the vacuum pump of claim 1 must be shown or cancelled from the claim. As noted above, the drawings were changed in the previous response and the drawings do not contain new matter. Therefore, the objection to the drawings by the Examiner has been overcome.

In item 3 on page 3 of the above-identified Office action, claim 11 has been rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

More specifically, the Examiner has stated that it is unclear if the valve block in claim 11 is the same as the valve block recited in claim 6.

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Claim 11 has been amended so as to facilitate prosecution of the application. Therefore, the rejection has been overcome.

It is accordingly believed that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the matter may be resolved. The above-noted changes to the claims are provided solely for cosmetic or clarificatory reasons. The changes are not provided for overcoming the prior art nor for any reason related to the statutory requirements for a patent.

In item 4 on page 4 of the Office action, claims 1-12 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Helmstädter et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,038,976) (hereinafter "Helmstädter") under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

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Claim 1 calls for, *inter alia*:

opening and closing the suction ducts by manipulating valves, the valves being closed by a mechanical force from a mechanical actuator, and the valves being opened by an action of compressed air on a piston in each of the valves.

It is once again noted that the corporate assignee of the Helmstädter reference is also the assignee of the instant application. Therefore, applicants are very familiar with the Helmstädter reference.

The Helmstädter reference does not disclose a force applied to a valve for closing the valve where the force is a mechanical force from a mechanical actuator. More specifically, the recess (57) and the first and second control elements (52 and 53) are not a mechanical actuator at all. Because of the recess (57), the openings (60) on the second control element (53) are arranged in an arcuate and coaxial manner with respect to the axis (59) (column 9, lines 31-36). By adjusting the control elements (52 and 53) relative to one another, an adjustment of the recess (57) to the openings (60) can be performed. Therefore, compressed air is led to the valve and the valves (32) are switched pneumatically (column 9, lines 31-36).

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The Helmstädter reference discloses that the control elements (52 and 53), the recess (57) along with the openings (60) are parts of a pneumatic actuator and are not a mechanical actuator as required by the claims of the instant application. Helmstädter also explicitly discloses that the valves are switched pneumatically (column 9, lines 31-32).

As seen from the above-given remarks, the reference does not show opening and closing the suction ducts by manipulating valves, the valves being closed by a mechanical force from a mechanical actuator, and the valves being opened by an action of compressed air on a piston in each of the valves, as recited in claim 1 of the instant application.

Since claim 1 is allowable over Helmstädter, dependent claims 2-5 are allowable over Helmstädter as well.

The following further remarks pertain to claim 6.

Claim 6 calls for, *inter alia*:

the valves being opened by compressed air acting on the pistons, and a mechanical actuator configured to selectively

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push the piston rods into the valve block with a mechanical force for closing selected ones of the valves.

As seen from the above-given remarks, the reference does not show the valves being opened by compressed air acting on the pistons, and a mechanical actuator configured to selectively push the piston rods into the valve block with a mechanical force for closing selected ones of the valves, as recited in claim 6 of the instant application. The Helmstädter reference discloses that valves are pneumatically controlled.

Helmstädter does not disclose closing a valve with a mechanical actuator. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, in which the valves are opened by compressed air acting on the pistons, and a mechanical actuator is configured to selectively push the piston rods into the valve block with a mechanical force for closing selected ones of the valves.

Since claim 6 is believed to be allowable over Helmstädter, dependent claims 7-12 are believed to be allowable over Helmstädter as well.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1 or 6. Claims 1 and 6

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are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claims 1 or 6, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-12 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

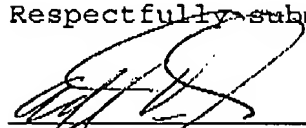
If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

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Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner
Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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For Applicant(s)

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